

Decorating the House and Gifts



One grows tired of the sameness of Christmas decorations. A red and white living room will be friendly and gay. An old white mantel will make a wonderful centerpiece, as the hearth is ever the center of the home. White cotton snow covering the mantel shelf, with a pair of great tall thin red candles flanking both sides of a miniature tree in the middle, is suggested as an attractive setting. The green of the tree would be subordinate, making red the principle part of the story. Red and white decorations hanging from chandeliers, or wall brackets, and placed over picture frames, will add to the effect. Beaded fringes made of cranberries and popcorn will add wonderful to one of the big white globes usually in the center of the room.

Green and white will be cool and quiet for the library, or for the dining room. In the latter one might want a special note of emphasis in four tall red candles on the table. In the library the soft green of bayberry candles will seem fitting. Tinsel can be combined effectively with either red or green. The use of long lines of tinsel or of tinsel ornaments will give an unusual touch to your decorations. You know it doesn't have to be used exclusively for the Christmas tree. Tinsel can be used for tying Christmas gifts, combined with red or green ribbon, or tied into the bow knots on the packages. Brilliant colors for tying makes attractive all sorts of gifts, and the combination can be chosen from colors that clash slightly. Bright blue and green tied together will attract attention, as will two

shades of red—like cherry and crimson, for instance. Little flat paper flowers of gay colors can be cut out by the children, and with a little paste can be used as seals. These will be effective on a background of white tissue paper. Table decorations give one abundant opportunity for the use of the imagination. A large snowball containing tiny wrapped gifts, each with a ribbon attached, is not an entirely new idea, but it can be decorated in a new way by having each string lead to a place card, on which resides a gumdrop man with clove eyes. Gumdrops can be used in so many ways for decorations. Christmas trees eight inches high can be constructed of them. Four of these set on the table with fat gumdrop men on sleds here and there will make a quaint and unusual table treatment.



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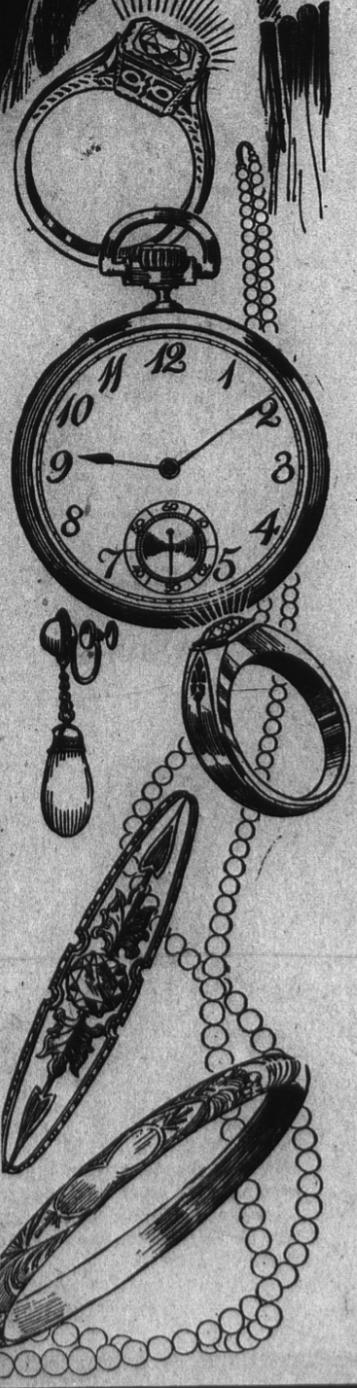
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ONLY 9 MORE SHOPPING DAYS



Characters: Six tin soldiers in bright red coats, two circus clowns, donkey and elephant, black mammy with doll, gingham dog and calico cat, two teddy bears, six baby dolls with lighted candles. All parts to be taken by children except doll carried by mammy. Donkey and elephant can be omitted and live dogs substituted if available.

Scene: Toy shop, shelves large enough for children to sit on them. Tin soldiers, very erect and stiff, stand either side of door, center stage. Santa enters and the tin soldiers salute stiffly.

Santa: Are you all ready to be packed tonight? Each one must be in place by Christmas morning.

(Teddy Bear ambles over to him.)

Teddy Bear: Can't we have our play time? You said we could.

Santa: Why, certainly. Only wait for a little while. Two children, very good children, have begged to see you perform before I pack you away. I shall be very busy with my lists of good children, so they will watch here alone. Of course, they will go to bed early, and then you may all play 'till the clock strikes twelve. Remember! (Goes to door and calls) Oh Sally, Oh Pat! (Two children run and hug him and stare round the room.)

Sally: Why, Santa! Oh, aren't they lovely! Look at the mammy doll, Pat.

Pat: Gee whiz! Look at those soldiers and the clowns and everything! Wheel! (Santa exits.)

Mammy Doll: If you all will sit down we'll do our part to afford you a magnificent entertainment. (Sally and Pat express surprise at hearing a doll speak, and sit down at the left of stage.)

Mammy: Step out, now, you tin soldiers! (Music starts, and Mammy beats time with her feet. Tin soldiers march and countermarch to any good march music, finish in former place.)

Mammy: Now comes de grand wrastlin match 'twixt T. R. Bear and Theodore, the well known scrappers. Come forward, yo'uns! (Teddy Bears tumble each other about until one sneaks off, licked.)

Mammy: Next comes the sleepy time dance by all the baby dolls. (Baby dolls parade with lighted candles, soft music, and finally, yawning, come back to former places.)

Mammy: Now comes the biggest and best and funniest clowns in captivity. (Clowns come forward turning handsprings. Animals, if any, perform. Clowns end by dragging forward Gingham Dog and Calico Cat. Cat spits and Dog growls.)

Sally: Oh, Pat, don't you remember? They're from Eugene Field's poem. Can you say it? How did it start? (Pat starts poem and stops as if remembering, then finishes. Dog and Cat follow in pantomime until they fight, when clowns rush forward and separate them.)

Mammy: Shush now. I'm gonna sing dis yere lamb chile to sleep. (Sings lullaby—"Sweet and Low," of any other available. At end children are asleep. Santa comes in, sees them, chuckles.)

Santa: Well, you've done your part; now play till twelve, then I'll come for you (exit). Children stay in places asleep.

A Tin Soldier: Say, Baby Doll, let me have a candle, will you? (All take candles and solemnly do Baby Doll march to same music.)

Mammy: Well, I've always wanted to march, now I'm going to, so there! An' all you l'il fellows follow me.

(Puts down doll for Gingham Dog to guard, assumes command of Baby Dolls, and they all go through Tin Soldier march. This should be made very funny.)

First Clown: Oh, if this is the time to do just as we please, me and Jim here we're going to sing a lullaby and rock those Teddy Bears to sleep!

Teddy Bears: What do ya wanta pick on us for, anyway? (Clowns pursue Teddy Bears around stage, catch them; holding them awkwardly, sing the same lullaby as Mammy sang, going off key worse and worse. Toward end Gingham Dog howls and Cat meows, making an awful noise. Santa rushes in.)

Santa: Great Scott! Is this the way you enjoy yourselves? It's a wonder you didn't wake those two kiddies—all this noise and howling! Come, hurry; you're 'way past the time. The sleigh is waiting. (All go off stage, sleigh bells ring off stage. Curtain.)

SCENE 2

Children awake before fireplace, where stockings are hanging filled with presents. Pat rubbing eyes and yawning.

Pat: Sally, did you hear sleigh bells?

Sally (sleepily): Seems as if I did; had such a funny dream. All the toys were cutting up and Santa packed them off.

Pat: So did I dream that! Isn't it funny? Oh, look! he's been here. Look at our stockings! Oh, Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas! (Grabs stocking and, hugging it to him, dashes around the stage. Sally follows with her stocking. (Curtain.)

(Note.—Santa can now come before the curtain with his sack of gifts for the school children or for those in the audience.)